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Seventieth session
Item 54 of the provisional agenda*
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 69/87 on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, after consulting the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to report on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted to the Assembly pursuant to that request.

2. On 14 May 2015, the Secretary-General addressed notes verbales to the Permanent Representatives of Member States to the United Nations, including the Permanent Representative of Israel, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under resolutions 69/87 and 69/89 and requested them to inform him of any action that their Governments had taken or envisaged taking in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. In connection with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 69/87, the Secretary-General has obtained from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA the information available to him on the return of refugees registered with the Agency. As indicated in previous reports on the subject, the Agency is not involved in any arrangements for the return of refugees, nor is it involved in any arrangements for the return of displaced persons who are not registered as refugees. Its information is based on requests by returning registered refugees for the transfer of their UNRWA registration records from Jordan, Lebanon or the Syrian Arab Republic to the areas to which they have returned. The Agency would not necessarily be aware of the return of any registered refugees who did not request the transfer of their registration records. So far as is known to the Agency, from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, 300 refugees registered with UNRWA returned to the West Bank and 182 to the Gaza Strip from places outside the occupied Palestinian territory. It should be noted that some of those may not have been displaced in 1967, but may have been

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displaced in earlier or later years or may be members of the family of a displaced registered refugee. Thus, taking into account the estimate given in paragraph 4 of the previous report (A/69/345), the number of displaced registered refugees who are known by the Agency to have returned to the occupied territories since June 1967 is about 36,110. The Agency is unable to estimate the total number of displaced inhabitants who have returned. It keeps records only of registered refugees and, as noted above, even those records, in particular with regard to the location of registered refugees, may be incomplete.

4. In connection with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 69/87, the Secretary-General refers to the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (A/70/13) and to the previous reports of the Commissioner-General for accounts of the ongoing assistance provided by UNRWA to persons displaced and in need of continued assistance.

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Seventieth session
Item 71 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, pursuant to paragraph 8 of Assembly resolution 69/162 and paragraph 4 of Human Rights Council resolution 27/25.

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Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

Summary

The report is submitted in accordance with resolution 69/162 of the General Assembly, by which the Assembly requested the Human Rights Council, through the Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, to submit a report on the work of the Working Group to the Assembly, and resolution 27/25 of the Council, by which the Council requested the Working Group to submit an annual report to the Council on all activities relating to its mandate, as well as to the Assembly in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent. The report covers activities undertaken during the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

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I. Introduction

1. By paragraph 8 of its resolution 69/162, the General Assembly requested the Human Rights Council, through the Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, to submit a report on the work of the Working Group to the Assembly. By paragraph 4 of its resolution 27/25, the Council requested the Working Group to submit an annual report to the Council on all activities relating to its mandate, as well as to the Assembly in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent. The present report is submitted in response to those requests and covers the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

2. The Working Group comprises five independent experts who serve in their personal capacity. In 2014, the Human Rights Council appointed three new members. The current members are Mireille Fanon Mendes-France (Chair), Verene Shepherd, Sabelo Gumedze, Michal Balcerzak and Ricardo A. Sunga III.

II. Activities of the Working Group

A. Annual meetings

1. Fifteenth session (17-21 November 2014)

3. The fifteenth session was a closed session in which the Working Group considered internal matters, including future work, country visits and communications, and held consultations with various stakeholders, including Governments, civil society and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Working Group took a number of decisions during the session, including to undertake follow-up visits five years after a country visit. It also decided to prepare a thematic study on racial stereotyping and to explore ways to increase collaboration with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

2. Sixteenth session (30 March-2 April 2015)

4. The sixteenth session was focused on development and people of African descent. The theme was selected to be in line with the theme of the International Decade for People of African Descent: "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". The Working Group discussed how policies, actions and programmes of development were affected by structural and internalized racism, racial discrimination, Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance towards people of African descent. It was underlined that measures to eliminate poverty and all forms of discrimination must be mutually reinforcing. The Working Group urged States to establish programmes, based on the participation of people of African descent and Africans, aimed at improving their economic and social conditions. It also reiterated its recommendation that special attention be devoted to the needs of people of African descent, including through the preparation of specific programmes of action, in cooperation with civil society, for the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade. A full account of the session and the recommendations made by the Working Group on the theme is contained in its report to the Human Rights Council at its thirtieth session (A/HRC/30/56).

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B. Country visits

1. Netherlands

5. The Working Group undertook a country visit to the Netherlands from 26 June to 4 July 2014. It issued a statement to the press following its visit.[1] A full account of its findings and recommendations is contained in its report submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirtieth session (A/HRC/30/56/Add.1).

2. Sweden

6. The Working Group undertook a country visit to Sweden from 1 to 5 December 2014. It issued a statement to the press following its visit. A full account of its findings and recommendations is contained in its report submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirtieth session (A/HRC/30/56/Add.2).

3. Italy

7. The Working Group undertook a country visit to Italy from 1 to 5 June 2015. It issued a statement to the press following its visit. It will submit a report containing its findings and recommendations to the Human Rights Council in September 2016.

4. Upcoming visits

8. The Working Group will visit the United States of America from 19 to 28 January 2016 at the invitation of the Government.

9. The Government of Israel has invited the Working Group to visit the country in 2015. The Working Group has proposed the dates of 13 to 17 December, which are under consideration by the Government.

10. The Government of Jamaica has extended an invitation for the Working Group to visit the country in 2016. The Governments of Madagascar and Mauritania have also extended such invitations.

11. The Working Group wishes to thank all the Governments that have cooperated with it and invited it to undertake country visits.

C. Communications

12. During the reporting period, the Working Group sent 12 communications, to the Dominican Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United States, regarding allegations falling under its mandate.

13. The communications sent and replies received are included in the following joint communications reports by special procedures mandate holders submitted to the Human Rights Council: A/HRC/30/27, A/HRC/29/50 and A/HRC/28/85. Those periodic reports include brief summaries of allegations communicated to States or other entities, with hyperlinks to the text of the communications sent and responses received.

[1] All press statements are available from www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/WGEPADIndex.aspx.

14. The Working Group also issued a number of media statements during the reporting period. On 19 June 2015, it issued a statement in which it deplored the killings of African Americans and urged that measures should be taken against racist crimes.

15. On 21 March 2015, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Working Group, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued a joint statement.

16. On 10 December 2014, on the occasion of the launch of the International Decade for People of African Descent, the Working Group and many special procedures mandate holders issued a joint statement.

17. On 5 December 2014, the Working Group issued a joint statement, with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, pertaining to the cases of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in the United States.

18. On 20 November 2014, the Working Group issued a statement in which it welcomed the adoption of the programme of activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent.

D. International Decade for People of African Descent

19. The Working Group welcomes the International Decade for People of African Descent as an extremely important opportunity for attention to be focused on the promotion and protection of the rights of people of African descent. It will increase the visibility and recognition of people of African descent in deconstructing the paradigm of racial discrimination and is a sign of States' political commitment to combating racial discrimination and Afrophobia.

20. The Working Group was directly involved in the development of the theme of the Decade, as well as the programme of activities for its implementation.

1. Participation in the official launch of the Decade

21. On 10 December 2014, the Chair of the Working Group delivered a statement and participated in the official launch of the Decade at Headquarters. She and Ms. Shepherd also participated in a press conference.

2. Promotional activities

22. The Working Group continued to actively promote and participate in activities to interact with civil society and assist stakeholders in the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade.

23. On 19 November 2014, at the seventh meeting of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, the Working Group provided a briefing on the Decade, including the preparations for it, its proclamation and its launch. The Chair emphasized the importance of the Decade and encouraged the members of the network to use the Decade to accord priority to activities to promote

and protect the rights of people of African descent. It was noted that the theme of the Decade reflected some of the focus areas of the network in implementing the guidance note of the Secretary-General on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, in particular with regard to combating racial discrimination, including in relation to people of African descent. The members of the network agreed to increase collaboration between the Working Group and the network to raise awareness and ensure comprehensive and coherent United Nations action during the Decade. In follow-up to the meeting, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization participated as panellists during the sixteenth session of the Working Group.

24. During its visits to Sweden and Italy, the Working Group actively promoted the Decade, encouraging all stakeholders to take action at the national level.

25. At the Working Group's sixteenth session, there was a panel discussion on plans for the implementation of the Decade with a focus on development. In addition, the Working Group organized a side event on 30 March to mark the beginning of the Decade as a significant moment in the fight for greater protection of the human rights of people of African descent.

26. Members of the Working Group also conducted promotional activities. In 2015, the Chair delivered statements and participated in a range of events, using the opportunities to raise awareness and call for the implementation of the Decade. The following are some highlights:

(a) On 11 February, she participated in Black History Month activities, delivering a presentation on the Decade in Paris in which she emphasized that its objective was to reverse the trend of global racism, Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance against people of African descent;

(b) On 21 March, she took part in activities to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, jointly organized by non-governmental organizations and municipal and university authorities in Malmö, Sweden. The discussion focused on how to govern based on non-discrimination and equality between peoples and States in order to combat racism, racial discrimination, Afrophobia, xenophobia, islamophobia and related intolerance;

(c) On 26 March, she attended the World Social Forum, held in Tunis, delivering a seminar on the Decade in which she discussed how to build a global network based on the objectives of the Decade;

(d) From 9 to 12 April, she participated in an international summit on reparations, held in New York. Participants reviewed the issue of reparations to understand the process for obtaining political recognition of reparations and thereby make a significant political change for millions of people that would allow them to move from being victims to being actors of social transformation;

(e) From 21 to 26 April, she took part in a meeting on the Decade organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to inform Afro-Venezuelans about the Decade and mobilize them;

(f) From 19 to 22 May, she attended a meeting on the Decade held in Bogota;

(g) From 15 to 19 June, she participated in the Afromadrid conference, held in Madrid, delivering an informative statement on the Decade;

(h) From 6 to 13 July, she took part in a meeting on decolonization of power and knowledge, held at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, delivering, among other things, a critical and analytical presentation on the Decade and its objectives;

(i) On 31 July, she participated in a workshop on the theme "Law for black lives", held in New York, which was intended to build a network of lawyers.

27. In 2015, Verene Shepherd used her radio programme, *Talking History*, broadcast in Jamaica, to promote the work of the Working Group and to explain the programme of activities for the Decade. She also delivered lectures and speeches bringing visibility to the work of the Working Group, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Decade. In particular, she discussed the matter of redress for victims of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism. In that regard:

(a) On 16 April, she delivered a speech on the theme "Black lives matter: the Caribbean and the call for reparatory justice", as part of the Walter Rodney speakers series, in Atlanta, Georgia, United States;

(b) On 23 May, she delivered the keynote address, on the theme "Backward stretch, forward reach", at a scholarship luncheon hosted by the Jamaican Women of Florida association in Miami, Florida, United States.

28. In addition, she attended the above-mentioned international summit on reparations held in New York in April, hosted by the Institute of the Black World, and hosted the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, who gave a presentation on cross-cutting issues affecting African women.

29. In 2014, she participated in other meetings and delivered presentations to increase support before the launch of Decade, as follows:

(a) On 11 June, she delivered the fourth annual George Lamming distinguished lecture, on the theme "Reparation, psychological rehabilitation and pedagogical strategies", at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, University of the West Indies, Barbados, emphasizing the issue of culturally sensitive education and history education for children, as outlined in the programme of activities for the Decade;

(b) On 9 August, she delivered the feature address, on the theme "In their name: Caribbean women, slavery and reparation", at the thirty-second annual Emancipation Day dinner, held in Trinidad. She also delivered the lecture the following day in Tobago;

(c) On 9 September, she gave the ninth annual Kenneth E. Robinson/Cyril Outerbridge Packwood memorial lecture, on the theme "Reparation, psychological rehabilitation and pedagogical strategies", in Hamilton;

(d) On 9 October, she gave the Alderman Sydney Smith memorial lecture, on the theme "Changing places: slavery, indentureship and the ranking game in colonial and post-colonial Jamaica", at the University of Hull, United Kingdom;

(e) From 12 to 14 October, she chaired a panel on academics for reparation as part of the second conference on reparations organized by the Caribbean Community, held in Antigua and Barbuda;

(f) On 28 October, she delivered the twenty-ninth annual Walter Rodney memorial lecture, on the theme "War memorials and black liberation: 'groundings' with Walter Rodney on history, heritage and activism", at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

(g) On 1 November, she gave a presentation on the theme "Challenges of a legacy: the continued struggle for rights for Africans in the twenty-first century" as part of a symposium to celebrate the work of Barry Chevannes and Rex Nettleford, former member of the Working Group, at the Institute of Jamaica in Kingston;

(h) On 14 November, she delivered a lecture on the theme "The politics of memory: historicizing Caribbean women's political activism" at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies in Barbados.

3. Submission on the Forum for People of African Descent

30. Following the call for submissions by OHCHR in anticipation of the discussion by the Human Rights Council on the mandate and modalities of the Forum for People of African Descent, the Chair, on behalf of the Working Group, submitted a paper on the Working Group's vision for the Forum.

31. On 17 April 2015, OHCHR transmitted a compilation of the submissions received to Member States for consideration during their consultations.[2]

E. Other activities relating to the United Nations

32. At the invitation of the President of the General Assembly, Ms. Shepherd delivered the keynote address on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at Headquarters on 20 March 2015. The theme for the commemorative event was "Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today".

33. She also participated in the unveiling of the permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, *The Ark of Return*, at Headquarters on 25 March 2015, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

34. On 5 March 2015, Sabelo Gumedze gave a presentation on lessons for South Africa in the elimination of racial discrimination against Africans and people of African descent during a meeting with mandate holders organized by the South African Human Rights Commission. The aim of the meeting was to contribute to shaping the Commission's strategic engagement in promoting compliance with international and regional human rights instruments. The meeting was also attended by a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay.

[2] See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/InternationalDecade/Pages/InternationalDecadeAfricanDescent.aspx.

III. Conclusions

35. The present report and the range of activities in which the Working Group has been involved during the reporting period demonstrate that the Working Group has embraced the opportunity provided by its mandate to popularize the idea that the human rights, inherent dignity and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent are important and must be respected.

36. The worldwide escalation of Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance continues to be a matter of concern.

37. The Working Group will use the opportunity created by the International Decade for People of African Descent to intensify efforts to raise awareness of issues pertaining to people of African descent. Education is a fundamental tool in breaking down stereotypes and cultural barriers and all members are committed to spreading the message through all means necessary in order to attain those goals.

38. The country visits undertaken by the Working Group show how structures established based on racial bias or discrimination continue to have a lasting and detrimental effect on people of African descent and Africans in the diaspora.

39. The Working Group finds that equal rights for people of African descent or Africans have yet to be attained.

40. The Working Group is convinced that the Decade should also afford an opportunity to analyse gender discrimination faced by people of African descent and will consider intersectional forms of discrimination faced by people of African descent.

41. The transatlantic slave trade, enslavement and colonialism are still to be recognized by all States as crimes against humanity. In that context, it is important and relevant that the *General History of Africa* prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in particular volume IX thereof, be popularized in all regions.

42. The Working Group is ready to participate actively in all decisions and activities concerning the Decade and to assist all stakeholders and strengthen partnerships between Governments, civil society and people of African descent themselves to implement the programme of activities for the Decade and finally ensure justice for the millions of people of African descent and Africans.

43. The Working Group fervently hopes that at its first session the Forum for People of African Descent will consider the challenges identified in the course of the Decade and proposes that the Forum focus at that session on justice.

44. The Working Group recognizes that, without the essential contribution of civil society and non-governmental organizations, efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia, Islamophobia and related intolerance remain invisible. The link between their work, States' work and the work of various United Nations mechanisms must be strengthened and made visible by equitable partnerships and developed jointly.